

MODERN HISTORY OF THE FISHERMEN'S
MOVEMENTS OF BRAZIL

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Fishermen, the forgotten people

Due to the geographical extension and the biological diversity of coastal regions of Brazil, there is no national organization which has the legitimacy to represent the interests of Brazilian fishermen. Estimates indicate that there are around 80,000 artisanal fishermen in Brazil, of which about 10,000 in the state of Ceará.

The constitutional representation of fishermen is organized in Confederation (federal level), Federation (state level) and fishermen's colonies (municipal level). This model imposed on fishermen in variable forms from 1814 to 1920 by the Navy never had the objective to organize fishermen, but to integrate them into the national defense system and make them submissive. Even though military authorities turned over control of fishermen to civil government, fishermen continue to be poorly represented by corrupt and selfish leaders and without due democratic process. Thus fishermen have been poorly represented at all three government levels.

Various regional non governmental organizations have tried to lead fishermen out of this eternal dependency with variable success: CPP Pastoral Fishermen's Council - has worked with fishing communities since the 70's despite the military governments displeasure and has been able to form some of today's more responsible leaders. But the movements that it has supported such as MOPECE State Movement of Fishermen in Ceará, MOXAPE National Fishermen's Movement of Brazil have had a lot of difficulty due to lack of leaders and grassroots support.

In 1993 an informal fishermen's movement took shape from the little village of Prainha do Canto Verde in the state of Ceará, motivated by René Schärer, a Swiss airline executive who had decided to abandon his professional career and dedicate his know-how to a privately financed development project. An initiative to show that artisanal fishing is sustainable and to bring to the attention of the public and the authorities the difficulties and the situation of abandon of artisanal fishermen and women in Brazil, which has been worrying leaders of fishermen's movements. It was also meant to call attention to the problem of predatory fishing of lobster, the threat to living space of natives by uncontrolled real estate speculation or in other words the question of survival for thousands of families dependent on fishing for their survival.

S.O.S. Survival creates awareness

The trip of the Jangada S.O.S. Survival (S.O.S. Sobrevivência) had considerable repercussions in the national and international media. The sail-raft left from the beach of Prainha do Canto Verde in the state of Ceará on April 4, 1993 with 4 fishermen (Edilson Fonseca Fernandes, Mamede Dantes de Lima, Francisco Abílio Pereira and Francisco da Silva Valente) being accompanied along the coast with a small car by 2 women from the village (Marlene Fernandes de Lima and Michelle Schärer - a graduate in zoology from the University of Central Florida) who were responsible for logistical support services such as supplies, communication, press relations and the organization of meetings with fishermen's -, environmental- and human rights groups along the route with 20 intermediate stops. 74 days later the brave traveler's arrived in Rio de Janeiro where they were welcomed by a large crowd, representatives of NGOs, authorities and the media.

The expedition was a spontaneous reaction to the intolerable situation and the desire of several

fishermen to show their bravery and repeat the trip of 4 fishermen back in 1941 lead by "Jacaré", made famous by the American movie director Orson Welles, who filmed the story during a stay in Brazil amid controversy due to the tragic death of "Jacaré" and the political pressure applied by the Military Government of Getulio Vargas and the U.S. State Department. The film never completed by Orson Welles, was finished by Paramount and released under the title "It's all True" in 1994. The expedition S.O.S. Sobrevivência was planned and carried out by a small group of community leaders, René and a group of idealists and volunteers from the Federal University of Ceará who worked hard to make the trip a success. 8 NGO's gave moral support to the expedition while government organizations and other fishery stakeholders chose to stay away. Who didn't like the idea were the naval authorities who never had envisioned independent fishermen. So four days before departure the organizer were warned by the Commander of the Port Authority in Fortaleza that the Navy had refused the authorization for the trip. The expedition members simply ignored the information and launched off to sea.

During the 74 days the 8 NGO's which supported the protest trip, organized 4 seminars to discuss the themes of the voyage with the participation of the public, NGO's, fishery specialists as well as fishermen- an women from the state of Ceará. Concrete proposals for solutions were subsequently sent to federal, state and municipal authorities: NGO's throughout Brazil and a large number of fishermen's organizations.

Unfortunately the well intentioned initiative did not find the desired echo with the authorities, be it the State Government of Ceará, IBAMA (Brazilian Institute for the Environment of the Ministry of Environment) or any others that should be concerned about the environment, natural resources and its economic, social and ecological importance for sustainable development. Both Brazil's President Itamar Franco and Ceará's Governor Ciro Gomes refused to receive the members of the expedition and their proposals . There was absolutely no dialogue with the Director of IBAMA (Brazilian Institute of Environment, responsible for fisheries administration) . despite the fact that predatory fishing of lobster by divers capturing large amounts of immature individuals was getting worse by the day, causing economic damage to the whole fishing industry, loss of taxes and exports to the state and increased violence in the sea between artisanal fishermen and pirate ships. Lobster catches which had risen from 1'922 tons in 1985 to 2,379 tons in 1990 started to decline until reaching 1,343 kgs in 1999 (exports origin Ceará). The lobster industry was totally demoralized and suffering heavy financial losses, while the activities of pirate ships, capturing lobsters with illegal fishing techniques and destroying the traps of artisanal fishermen, became the most profitable business in fisheries. It seemed that with the exception of artisanal fishermen, whose survival depends on fishing, nobody seemed to be very interested in the problem. Industrial fishing firms who had been heavily subsidized over the years were getting ready to move out of the business or waited for disaster to strike. The only positive fact was that NGO's that had been working with artisanal fishermen for some years moved closer together and under the leadership of Prainha do Canto Verde, the Movement of Artesanal Fishermen of Ceará (MOPECE), the Pastoral Fishermen's Council (CPP) and the **NGO "Instituto Terramar" founded in 1993** started to look for solutions.

Artesanal fishermens survival is at stake

The Governor of the State of Ceará, Mr. Ciro Gomes, who had never responded to the proposals of the organizers of the protest trip, went as far as stating to an American journalist that the Artesanal

Fishermen belonged to the Museum and the people behind the movement were a bunch of European romantics.

In 1994 a new director Jose Augusto Negreiros Aragão takes over at IBAMA, he is a graduate in Fisheries Sciences of the University of Ceará's Labomar brought along intimate knowledge and a lot of experience in fishing. Most important, he quickly recognized that the solution of the problem could only be found through dialogue with all interested parties. He was the first official who recognized importance of the fishermen's participation in the search of solution. This was the beginning of a partnership between fishermen, Ibama, NGOs, scientists and other stakeholders that would change fishing history. The first result was a detailed fisheries management proposal for the sick lobster fishery. In the first attempt the proposal ended up in some drawer in the Environmental Ministry in Brasília.

During the first months of 1995 predatory fishing by illegal boats equipped with illegal diving equipment increased despite the closed season. There was no meaningful enforcement due to lack of money and political of fisheries authorities. The illegal lobster fleet by now was three times the size of the legal one.

At this point a consensus started to grow between fishermen, lobster firms, legal boat owners, Ibama and scientists that the situation had become unsustainable. But what should be done to reach the highest sphere's of the State Government and the President of Ibama in the capital of Brasília? Once again the fishermen of Prainha do Canto Verde took the initiative and invited fishermen from neighboring communities to discuss the crises. The meeting resulted in a plan to force federal and state government to take meaningful action. On April 4, 1995 (two years after the protest trip of S.O.S. Survival) 500 fisher-men and women from 8 communities united in the **Fishermen's Forum of Ceará** and marched to the state Capital and took up position in front of the State Governors Palace. A delegation was received by the personal assistant of State Governor Mr. Tasso Jereissati and presented the demands of the fisher-men and women of Ceará contained in the **"Letter of Prainha do Canto Verde"**. Protest letters were also handed over to representatives of IBAMA and Naval Authorities.

The timing was right. The State Secretary for Urban Development and Environment was asked by the Governor to invite stakeholders and fisheries authorities for a meeting to analyze the cause of the problem and to find solutions, this lead to the creation of the State Fisheries Committee. Shortly thereafter members of the Forum cornered the new President of Ibama during a visit to Fortaleza and presented their demands.

Since then a lot has happened and the **Fishermen's Forum of the East Coast of Ceará** has been the driving force behind the changes:

Creation of **the State Fisheries Committee** which includes stakeholders and institutions with interests in fishing and which counts with a strong representation of artisanal fishermen. (COMPESCF)

The Lobster Management Plan worked out by the COMPESCF showing the way to sustainability for lobster fishery.

The Fishermen's Forum against Predatory Fishing was taking shape and becoming more and more active. Fishermen from the east coast meet monthly to discuss issues and monitor the Fisheries Committee and plan future actions.

The "Instituto Terramar" takes up the vacant leadership role in the Fishermen's movement and provided technical assistance and advise to the Fishermen's Forum.

Artesanal fishermen from the east coast join the fishermen from the Community of Redonda to collect money in order to purchase a enforcement boat thus forcing fisheries authorities to start enforcing fisheries laws at sea. **In two months over 50 pirate boats are apprehended and the owners punished.**

In the absence of meaningful enforcement on land the fishermen create their own judiciary – community's like Redonda and Praia do Canto Verde create their own local fisheries regulations and fishermen start to respect their laws under peer pressure.

Mayors of Coastal Communities: after the elections in 1996 the Fishermen's Forum invited newly elected mayors for a briefing and convinced these officials of the economic and social importance of artesanal fishing. Municipal support for fisheries management has improved considerably.

Members of the Fishermen's Forum participated in the **II. International Workshop of Artesanal Fishing** organized by the Federal University of Ceara and the Canadian Development Agency in 1996 and presented their strategy for sustainable fishing.

In 1995 the Fishermen's Forum had taken up a new crusade: Provide all Artesanal Fishermen with the **lobster licenses** that had been denied them in favor of the motorized fleet. The main arguments were: the small fisheries effort the sail boat fleet represents, the responsible fisheries practices of artesanal fishermen on the east coast, their efforts against predatory fishing and the historical rights of traditional communities who had started fishing lobster in 1955 ten years before motorized boats entered the fishery. The IBAMA President finally succumbed to pressure of public opinion and conceded the access to lobster licenses for small scale fisheries.

Instituto Terramar invites Ibama to participate in the organization Of the **I. International Seminar on Responsible Fishing**. The event with over 250 participants from India, Canada and all over Brasil debates the FAO Code of Conduct for responsible fishing. Over 120 artesanal fishermen participate for the first time in their life in a real seminar and show their creativity and commitment to responsible fishing in 6 regional workshops. The seminar is financed by *ICSE* (International Collective in Support of Fishworkers) from India which has decided to support the fight of Ceará's fishermen. The Fishermen's Forum participated with a strong delegation and established the first contacts with fishermen from the West Coast.

Fishermen suffer the ups and downs of the Federal Government, the lack of interest of the State Government, repression from corrupt enforcement agents, political interference in Ibama and continuous changes in the fisheries authorities staff. Lobster catches drop year after year. **The**

years 1997 and 1998 are the worst in lobster history. But the Fishermen's Forum goes on fighting.

1998: A new Management at Ibama Ceará, a new partnership. **The fishermen and Instituto Terramar** enter with US\$ 10,000.00 from ICSE to finance 50% of the Lobster Caravan. The LOBSTER CARAVAN accompanied by members of the Fishermen's Forum covered the whole coast of the state of Ceará (570 kilometers) with a road-show to create awareness for responsible fishing and to strengthen the partnership within the fisheries sector. For the first time in Brazil's history artisanal fishermen took the initiative to change fisheries regulations. At six regional seminars proposals for changes in fisheries regulations which the Fishermen's Forum had presented to the State Fisheries Committee and IBAMA and the question of reductions in the fisheries effort were discussed. At the final seminar in April of 1998, 66 delegates from the 6 regions approved the changes to fisheries regulations and criteria for future fleet reductions.

Fishermen from the west coast started to form an alliance with the activists from the east coast and subsequently participated in meetings with their allies.

The only organizations that had remained conspicuously absent from the process of participation of fishermen in the decision making process were the State Federation of Fishermen and a majority of the fishermen's colonies and one of the tasks of the Fishermen's Forum was to remove some of these leaders through the democratic process. This objective became more important as there were signs from the capital city of Brasília that President Fernando Henrique Cardoso would soon be making sweeping changes at the ministerial level and finally put order to the chaos in fisheries.

1999: The fisheries crises continued with further declines in lobster catches and fish catches were also showing signs of stress due to increased fishing effort on ground fish resources. With declining catches illegal lobster boats started to dive after ground fish at the continental platform thus invading one of the remaining reserves for artisanal fishers. Still on the negative side the state government withdrew its support from the State Fisheries Committee which would have serious consequences on the fisheries management process.

But the year also brought some major changes and conquests for the **Fishermen's Forum**: The country's President started to change government structures, which initially looked more like one step forward and two steps backward, as government employees in one ministry were putting all kinds of difficulties to transferring responsibilities to another. The Fishermen's Forum had members participating in meetings with the emerging specialists at the Federal Level, many of them being former allies and members of Instituto Terramar capitalized on its credibility and participated in the changes at the political level by participating at working group meetings and discussion on the Agenda 21 in Brasília.

Leadership Training Course for Coastal Communities: Instituto Terramar started a three year program to build community and fisheries leaders. 28 young men and women completed the first 6 week course that would help them to better represent the interests of their communities in influencing public policy decision that impact on the lives of coastal residents, such as fisheries management and integrated coastal development. Several of the participants are activists from the Fishermen's Forum. The leadership course also helped to accelerate changes in several fishermen's

colonies and within the corruption ridden Fishermen's Federation.

1999 also saw an effort to restructure the Forum to make it more effective and grassroots driven; thus the assembly of community delegates decided on a new structure with a coordination team with 5 members, community delegates with two members from each village thus making up 44 Members and two times a year **Fishermen's Assemblies** from all the communities; members of NGO would henceforth act as advisors but, leave decision making to the delegates and executive functions to the member of the coordination team. Fishermen from the west coast were participating as observers.

In November the stakeholders took one more step towards solving fisheries problem solving; aware of the fact that government institutions were neither prepared nor willing to solve fisheries problems alone, the **Lobster Foundation** was created, initially meant as a financial instrument by fishing industry to help support enforcement activities it is now being organized to be a partner of government in future fisheries management; supporting a variety of activities such as research, enforcement, environmental education, training etc. Most surprisingly the industrial sector opened the door to other stakeholders who are now members of the board, among them three members from the Fishermen's Forum and one from Instituto Terramar. Financial resources will be raised with a voluntary tax on sea food exports.

The year 2000 brought the conquest of the conquest of the Fishermen's Federation with the election victory of one of the original members of the Fishermen's Forum'. While it will take a while to clean up the disaster left behind by the previous board of directors it is a very clear sign that the Forum of Fishermen has reached one of its most important objectives: **Guarantee the legitimate representation of fishermen in Brasil**. This will help to reach the next objective which is: grassroots participation of fishermen.

The other good news came from the west coast, where under the leadership of the graduates of the leadership training course the **Fishermen's Forum of the West Coast** was born.

Some of the challenges for the new leadership in the Fishermen's Federation and the two Forum's:

- Consolidate the democratic process in the Fishermen's Colonies
- Develop grassroots participation
- Maintain its partnership with the other stakeholders
- Continue to lobby for responsible fisheries management
- Propose and implement areas reserved for artisanal fishing
- Participate in the process of integrated coastal management
- fisheries management and the Agenda 21
- Bring the State Government back into the stakeholder group

Changes at the federal level are continuing at a slow pace, but many of our proposals and programs are being included in planning and we have several allies taking over important positions in both Ministries at the management and policy decision level. The fact that fisheries will be divided into two ministries is far from being an ideal solution, but we will have to adapt to this and make the best out of the situation.

Praia do Canto Verde, July 14th 2000

The drought in the sea

(Adapted from from "Die Durre im Meer" by Beat Gruniger, published by the monthly swiss magazine for development "MOSQUITO")

Many regions in Brazil's northeast are currently besieged by extreme drought. In one of these states, Ceará, a group of people from small fishing communities is fighting to draw world attention to another serious drought, the drought in the sea.

By Beat Grüniger/translation by Patrick H.

Anyone looking at the map of Southamerica would envy Brazil. No other country in the region has such a large extent of coastline. And what a coast: thousands of kilometers of beautiful scenery waiting to spark the imagination of any overworked European who dreams of a relaxing life on a tropical beach. It is enough to tempt anyone to trade the office cubicle for fishing line and bait, and daily ocean trips under the warm sun. This idyllic picture of "paradise", however, is very distant from the reality faced by over 500'000 fishing people in Brazil who struggle to sustain themselves and their families in a harsh environment, with resources that are rapidly becoming more scarce each year.

Despite the United Nations declaring 1998 as the YEAR OF THE OCEAN, the focus is far from the daily lives of millions of artisanal fishermen world wide who's struggle for survival does not match anyone's image of paradise. Few realize that these fishermen not only help protect the environment through sustainable harvesting of the ocean, but their simple communities also act as barriers to uncontrolled coastal development which only realize profits for a few. Now comes a new threat to the survival of these hard working people. In the past few years fish captures have greatly diminished as a result of global over-fishing, and mismanagement of the limited fisheries resources. This is creating a scarcity of fish which can only be described as a "drought in the sea". The same drought which reminds of the crises in the '70's when extreme hunger could only be averted with massive help from abroad and which even today leads people to migrate to the cities and causes looting of food-trucks and food storage areas.

Model of sustainable development

Hardest hit in the state of Ceará, with an artisanal fishing population of approximately 40'000, are the fishermen east of the state capital Fortaleza around the community of Prainha do Canto Verde. There René Schärer, a retired airline executive, has worked since 1992 promoting the fishing movement and improving the standard of living for the community. With the help from various organizations in Switzerland such as the "Working-group for Development and Tourism" and the "Amigos de Prainha do Canto Verde", a non-profit organization founded by Schärer, not only has the health, education and welfare of the people involved improved, but this little community has become the center of a growing movement to effectively organize the countries fishermen.

The success of the project at Prainha, which is now considered a model for community development, was recognized nationally when the Abrinq Foundation awarded René a prize for his work in favor of children's rights. The foundation called attention to the fact that within three years the village achieved zero infant mortality and reduced school dropout rates to practically zero in five. Now he is looking at implementing eco-tourism at Prainha do Canto Verde, to share both the beauty of the location and the vision of a sustainable future.

The battle for fishers rights

As programs initiated in the village led to positive results in practically all areas, the fight for the basic rights of artisanal fishermen, remains the central objective. The fishermen's association of Prainha has become the

spokes-organization of a population-group, which lacks recognition for its social, economic and ecological contribution in Brazil and elsewhere in the world. With a spectacular and risky protest-trip of a small jangada (typical sailraft) to Rio de Janeiro in 1993

4 fishermen from the village aroused public interest and called Brazil's attention to the threat of their profession by predatory fishing and mass-tourism development. Their appeal to the Brazilian Government went almost unheeded, but for their bold action they received the support of several organizations and access to the press and the public.

Today's drought in the sea is not due to climate factors such as "El Niño" or global warming alone, but much more due to human intervention in nature's domain. Predatory fishers with illegal fishing gear and greed by industrial fishing interests contributed their share so that the livelihood of traditional fishers deteriorates continually. Even though the project in Prainha achieved better prices through direct marketing, the number of lobsters caught since 1996 is dropping dramatically.

With the help of the Federal University in Fortaleza the ocean-biological aspects of the reduction of catches were analyzed, but it is the political problem which threatens traditional fishery and that has to be exposed. The primary target of a worldwide campaign are Brazil's fisheries authorities in the Ministry of the Environment, IBAMA, which has done very little to implement the Lobster Management Plan which is on the table since 1995. This plan based on the models of other lobster producing countries and a result of a joint effort of all members of the fisheries sector in Ceara has the potential to solve the lobster crisis. The Forum of Fishermen against Predatory Fishing launched its appeal in August of 1998 asking the president of IBAMA to allocate the necessary funds to implement the plan. The fishermen also propose the introduction of a fund fed by a tax of 2% on lobster exports in order to avoid draining the scarce financial resources of the country, the fund would be administrated by the State Fisheries Committee with participation of the fishermen. Furthermore they propose that 50% of the budget for the Coastal Management Programs be reserved for fisheries management with community participation.

The campaign yields the first positive results

About 180'000 family members would benefit from the eventual recovery of lobster catches in the state of Ceara alone. While Brazil still exported 2.379 tons of lobsters in 1990 the result for 1998 is expected to fall to an all-time low of 1'100 tons. About 90 % of the exports come from the state of Ceara. Lobsters earned US\$ 50'000'000 -- in hard currency in 1990. By 1997 export earnings had dropped to 37 Million Dollars. Worse only for the artisanal fishermen themselves, their share of lobster catches which had still amounted to 15% in 1995 will probably drop to 2%, as their sailrafts have been grounded for most of the fishing season.

The threat to artisanal fishery along the northeastern coast of Brazil has been recognized by the "International Collective in Support of Fishworkers" (ICSF) which is headquartered in India. ICSF which had already financed the *International Seminar on Responsible Fishing* in September of 1997 in the state of Ceara also provided the funds to carry out *The Lobster Caravan* a conscience building and educational campaign for lobster fishers throughout the state in partnership with IBAMA this year. ICSF stands behind Rene and his companions to carry out the international campaign and the pressure has already shown the first practical result on the state level. State-Governor Tasso Jereissati has authorized a grant of US\$ 30'000 -- requested by the Fisherman's Forum for the reactivation of the community owned enforcement boat which is used to plow the sea, manned by IBAMA agents and armed military police, in pursuit of illegal fishing boats. The press release of the state government clearly showed the dis-satisfaction with the foot-dragging by IBAMA.

When we contacted Rene shortly before closing the edition he said: "The first wave of protests has hit IBAMA, but they prefer to believe that this is an isolated action by Rene". But insiders who know Rene, understand that this humble statement carries dynamite that will keep a lot of people at the Ministry of Environment on their toes.

MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR LOBSTER FISHERIES IN BRASIL (POPL)

The POPL, as it is called in Brazil, is the result of an amazing crusade for sustainability by a group of artisanal fishermen - **see SOS story**.

The plan was prepared by the members of the State Fisheries Committee and technicians of Ibama (Federal Fisheries Administration) and presented to the public in July of 1995. The Plan consists of the diagnostic and 8 chapters:

Diagnostic: The state of lobster fisheries is considered very serious with a steep decline in landings (1991: 2.700 t of tails/1995: 1.700 t of tails). The principal causes are excess fishing capacity, fishing with illegal fishing gear (diving), capture of immature individuals and a general free for all. Everyone does what he wants without thinking of the future and there is absolutely no action by fisheries authorities or any other institution.

1. **Basis for management:** Having stated the excess of fishing capacity and assuming that there are 1500 boats fishing in Brazil representing a fishing effort of 41.3 million traps-day, the principal objective is the gradual reduction until reaching the optimal effort. The plan foresees the following reduction:

1996: 1.260 boats representing a fishing effort of 34.7 millions of traps-day

1997: 1.115 boats representing a fishing effort of 30.7 millions of traps-day

1998: 1.020 boats representing a fishing effort of 28.1 millions of traps-day which

is considered the optimal fisheries effort for the stocks estimated.

Situation today: Data from Ibama show over 2000 boats fishing lobster in 1997, of these less

then 500 have a fishing-license and are up to date with license fees and fines. In the campaign to register all fishing boats which ended in October of 1998, less than 900 were registered and are paid up. This means that over 1000 boat owners chose to continue fishing illegally, despite amnesties in 1996 and again in 1998. **The State Fisheries Committee has already announced that it expects strict enforcement of license requirements with police actions at sea.**

2. **Strategic planning: Objectives:** At a national seminar with the participation of 11 Brazilian states in 1996 it was decided to create a regional commission with members from the State Fisheries Committees to be designated by the Ministry of the Environment with statutes to be approved by the Minister Gustavo Krause, to obtain financial resources from partners within and outside of government to nominate a national coordinator, promote the creation of the lobster foundation and encourage the creation of state fisheries committees.

Situation today: Practically nothing has been implemented. The regional coordinators nominated for the post have neither power nor responsibility or any clear job description sheet subsequently the one's nominated so far have handed in their resignation after a few months. Except for the state of Ceará, local fisheries committees are either non-existent or inactive.

3. **Enforcement: Objectives:** Create a team of special agents for sea and land-enforcement, boats and cars for enforcement operations, enforcement with community volunteers, enforcement agreements with police, marine and airforce, stop traffic of immature lobsters, create certificate of origin.

Situation today: After the spectacular enforcement results with the community enforcement program in 1995, effectiveness of enforcement has decreased, because of the lack of financial and prepared human resources. Because of political interventions and frequent changes of supervisors there is no continuity to the extent that authorized budgets are transferred to other states for emergency

operations. There have been two training programs for voluntary enforcement agents with community participation. In 1998 the state government of Ceara has contributed \$ 30.000.00 for the community boat at the request of the fishermen to guarantee minimum enforcement.

4. **Legislation:** *Objectives:* Approval of Senate bill 9.605 to strengthen legislation, simplify fisheries regulations.

Situation today: Senate bill 9.605 sponsored by Ceara State Senator Lucio Alcantara became law in April 1998. However, until today it has not been regulated and without it the necessary budgets for law enforcement this exemplary law instrument is fairly useless. **For the first time in history fisheries regulations were decided upon with fishermen's participation which also led to better and more practical regulations. Fishing communities introduced their own local legislation and use community courts to punish infractors.**

5. **Environmental education:** *Objectives:* Staff training, promote educational campaigns, produce TV and Radio spots, prepare material for environmental education and support communities in cooperative fisheries management.

Situation today: One of the strong points of Ibama and where the partnership with NGO's and fishers movements showed very positive results, such as the Seminar on the FAO Code of Conduct for responsible Fishing (first such event in latin america) and the lobster caravan. But by the middle of 1998 also this program was hit by the Presidents budget cutters with the help of the IMF (International Monetary Fund).

6. **Research:** *Objectives:* Bio-economic studies, investigation of distribution and recruitment of "Puerulus".

evaluate the impact of nets, in depth studies of natural nursing areas, make up fishing calendar, investigate factors which influence fishing effort, research of natural stocks in order to arrive at optimal number of captures.

Situation today: Not one single new research project was started since 1995. The lobster data

is so poor, that brasilian representatives at a conference of latin american lobster producers in 1998 found out that their data is practically useless to make any reliable stock estimates.

7. **Incentives:** *Objective:* Subsidize fuel costs, stop financing more lobster fishing boats.

Situation today: Official state bank have financed over 200 lobster boats with subsidized interest rates since 1995 adding to the excessive fishing effort and causing loan repayment defaults. Fuel costs for fisheries benefit from subsidies, but it is almost impossible to find a gas pump that sells the fuel to qualifying boat owners.

8. **Cost and revenue measures:** *Objectives:* Diversify products and markets, promote the product, improve quality, reduce waste, create alternative for idle capacity, reduce production costs, modernize fleet, train manpower and stimulate cooperativism.

Situation today: There has been no effort to achieve any of the above objectives. Worse, exporters had many containers returned for failure to pass inspections by health authorities.

The actions appearing in **fat print** were possible due to the partnership of fishermen's organizations and NGO's. For example, the purchase of the community enforcement ship, the operating costs of enforcement operations, the seminar on responsible fishing and the lobster caravan educational campaign with funds donated by the ICSF (International Collective in support of Fishworkers) in Madras, India.

CONCLUSION:

The POPL is an excellent plan, standing up to comparison with the Canadian or Australian lobster management plan which we have studied. Should it ever be fully implemented we will happily move it to the page "Good examples".

FACTS ABOUT LOBSTER FISHING IN

DATA: Number of direct jobs: 20'000

Number of indirect jobs: 10'000

Number of family members: 180'000

Number of boats (estimate): 3'000

Number of lobster licenses issued: 1'200

Number of lobster licenses valid in 1998: less than 500

Lobster exports* from the state of Ceara (tail/ton/year): 1'922 (1985)

2'379 (1990)

1'558 (1997)

(projection) 1'100 (1998)**

Lobster exports from the state of Ceara (MioUS\$): 50.0 (1990)

37.0 (1997)

Share of artisanal fishing fleet (estimate): 15% (1995)

(projection) 2% (1998)

Principal export markets: USA, JAPAN, EUROPE

Short lobster history: Before 1955 lobsters were used by fishermen for bait, probably by accident Mr. Morgan from somewhere in the USA discovered the existence of lobsters (the legend goes that he saw millions of lobsters from low-flying airplanes during World War II) and started to export. Until 1965 lobster fishery was done from jangadas (sail-rafts) when motorized boats and ships began to (over)explore. In the sixties lobster catches were so plentiful that fishermen's families were not able to eat all the lobster heads and had to bury them in the sand (only lobster tails were exported). 40 years later this sounds like a joke.

* = 95 percent of captures

* = Fishing area and fishing fleet has doubled since 1985

SOURCE: Data: Ibama

Estimates and projections: Forum dos Pescadores contra a Pesca Predatória

WHO IS WHO IN BRASIL'S LOBSTER BUSINESS

IBAMA (Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e dos recursos naturais renováveis) Department of the Ministry of the Environment responsible for ocean fisheries. IBAMA has offices in each one of the Brazilian states and territories. Heavy political interference on local level. Lately some responsibilities for fisheries development is being turned over to the Ministry of Agriculture.

President Fernando Henrique Cardoso in 1995 created the GESPE (Executive group for fisheries), it appears that this

Group has the task to draw up fisheries policy and legislation. There are no state level fisheries departments and state governments

generally attach very little importance to fisheries.

DPA The new Department for Fisheries and Aqua-culture in the Secretariat for Urban Development in the Ministry of Agriculture

SINDIFRIO: Syndicate of processing plants and seafood exporters. Used to control prices to keep income of fishermen to the

lowest possible level. Created a network of beach buyers to buy lobsters from fishermen. Some members of

SINDIFRIO are responsible for the export of undersize lobsters.

SINDIPESCA: Syndicate of small boat owners, few members since most of the boats fish legally anyhow.

FORUM DOS PESCADORES: Informal group of fishermen fighting for survival who receives technical support and advice from NGOs such as Terramar, CPP and Amigos de Praia do Canto Verde

LABOMAR: Department of the Federal University of Ceara which participates in research and fisheries regulation

CAPITANIA DOS PORTOS: Department of the Navy responsible for safety on the sea, boat registration and fishermen's certification. Absolutely refuses to participate in any activities to bring order to the chaos on the sea.

STATE FISHERIES COMMITTEE: COMESCE has over 20 members from all interest parties in fisheries – government, universities, NGOs, fishermen's unions and movements. The committee was created by government decree in 1995 as a culmination of the struggle of fishermen from the east coast to bring authorities to face the fisheries crisis.

INSTITUTO TERRAMAR: NGO founded in 1994 as a consequence of the protest campaign of artisanal fishermen against predatory

fishing. **S.O.S Sobrevivência** – the sail-raft with four fishermen that sailed from Ceara to Rio de Janeiro in 74 days.

SOURCE: Fórum dos Pescadores contra a Pesca Predatória

MODERN HISTORY OF THE FISHERMEN'S MOVEMENT OF BRASIL SINCE THE EARLY NINETIES

Fishermen, the forgotten people

Due to the geographical extension and the diversity of the different regions of Brazil, there is no national organization which represents all of the fishermen in this continental country. Estimates indicate that there are around 500.000 artesanal fishermen in Brazil, of which about 40 000 in the state of Ceará.

There are various regional or state organizations which act separately, action which is limited due to the lack of financial resources and the dispersion of entities of different characteristics, such as fishermen's colonies, state fishermen's federations and fishermen's movements which usually don't mean very much to the illiterate fishermen.

CPP (Conselho Pastoral dos Pescadores) is the only NGO's which has continually worked with artesanal fishermen since the 70's and tried to prepare leaders of the communities for the challenges ahead. The few leaders with some amount of credibility have gone through the CPP training program. Several regional movements like the MONAPE (National Movement) and MOPECE (State fishermen's movement) have tried to organize fishermen without much success.

In 1993 an informal fishermen's movement took shape from the little village of Prainha do Canto Verde in the state of Ceará, urged on by René Schärer, a Swiss airline executive on early retirement who worked with the local fishing community. His initiative aimed to show that artesanal fishing can be sustainable and to call attention of the public and the authorities to the situation of abandon of artesanal fishermen and women.

Since 1985 lobster fisheries was taking a turn to disaster. An invasion of illegal fishing boats using illegal diving equipment without minimal safety measures created armed conflicts between de divers and artesanal fishermen. Several men on both sides lost their lives, not counting the many victims of unsafe diving in search of the gold of the sea. Capture of undersized lobsters was on the increase and the fishermen themselves started to predate the lobster stocks.

S.O.S. Survival creates awareness

See preceding story: **Sailing for a Cause**

Unfortunately the well intentioned initiative did not find the desired echo with the authorities, be it the State Government of Ceara, IBAMA (Brazilian Institute for the Environment of the Ministry of Environment) or any others that should be concerned about the environment, natural resources and its economic, social and ecological importance for sustainable development. Both Brazil's President Itamar Franco and Ceará's Governor Ciro Gomes refused to receive the members of the expedition and ignored their proposals. There was no chance of dialogue with the Director of IBAMA (Brazilian Fisheries Authorities), despite the fact that predatory fishing of lobster by divers capturing large amounts of immature individuals was getting worse by the day, causing economic damage to the whole fishing industry, loss of taxes to the state and increased violence in the sea between artesanal fishermen and pirate ships. The lobster catches which in 1985 brought in 1.922 tons, rose to 2.379 tons in 1990 just to drop to 1.558 tons in 1997 (exports origin Ceará). The lobster industry was totally demoralized and suffering heavy financial losses, while the activities of pirate ships, capturing lobsters with illegal fishing techniques and destroying the traps of artesanal fishermen, reached incredible proportions. It seemed that with the exception of artesanal fishermen, whose survival depends on fishing, nobody seemed to be very interested in the problem. Industrial fishing firms who had been heavily subsidized over the years were getting ready to move out of the business or waited for disaster to strike. The only positive fact was that NGO's that had been working with artesanal fishermen for some years moved closer together, and under the leadership of René Schärer, the Movement of Artesanal Fishermen of Ceará (MOPECE), the Pastoral Fishermen's Council (CPP) and the new NGO "Institute Terramar" founded in 1994, kept alive the spirit of S O S - Survival and started to looked for solutions.

Artesanal fishermens survival is at stake

The Governor of the State of Ceara, Mr. Ciro Gomes, who had never responded to the proposals of the organizers of the protest trip, went as far as stating to an American journalist that the Artesanal Fishermen belonged to the museum and the people behind the movement were a bunch of European romantics.

At the end of 1993 the totally incompetent director of Ibama went into early retirement, and for the fishermen's luck the new director Jose Augusto Negreiros Aragao a graduate in Fisheries-engineering of the University of Ceara brought along intimate knowledge and a lot of hands on experience in fishing. Most important, he quickly recognized that the solution depended on the involvement of all interested parties, specifically including the artesanal fishermen. He recognized the fundamental importance of the fishermen's movements as a partner in the solution. This was the beginning of the exchange of information between fishermen, Ibama, NGO's and the scientists which finally resulted in a concrete and workable proposal. The proposal ended up in some drawer in the Environmental Ministry in Brasilia. During the first months of 1995 the problem deteriorated even further due to the total disregard of a large number of boats with illegal fishing-gear (divers) of the four month quarantine from January to April. Despite waves of denunciations by fishermen there was practically no enforcement in the sea or on land due to lack of money and political will of the Federal Government. The illegal lobster fleet by now was three times the size of the legal one.

At this point a consensus started to grow between fishermen, lobster firms, legal boat owners, Ibama and scientists that the situation had become unsustainable. But what should be done to reach the highest sphere's of the State Government and the President of Ibama in the capital of Brasilia? Once again the fishermen of Prainha do Canto Verde followed the advice of their leader, and invited fishermen of neighboring fishing communities to a meeting. Here the decision was taken to make one more final attempt to fight for their survival. On April 4, 1995 (anniversary of the trip to Rio de Janeiro) 500 fishermen from 8 communities assembled in front of the State Government Palace and a delegation handed the "Letter of Prainha do Canto Verde" to a representative of the Governor Mr. Tasso Jereissati. Letters were also handed over to representatives of Ibama and the Navy.

The timing was right. The State Secretary for Urban Development and Environment was asked by the Governor to invite all organizations and authorities involved for a meeting to analyze the cause of the problem and to find solutions. Shortly thereafter the new President of Ibama was cornered by representatives of the fishermen during a visit to Fortaleza and managed to present their case and awaken his immediate interest. Since then a lot has happened and the fishermen have been the driving force behind the changes.

The State Fisheries Committee which includes all the groups and institutions with interests in fishing and which counts with a

strong representation of artesanal fishermen (COMPESCE)

The Lobster Management Plan worked out by the COMPESCE and which could bring lobster fishery back to sustainability if it were to be at least partially implemented. Artesanal fishermen have implemented their part of the plan with great sacrifice.

The Fishermen's Forum against Predatory Fishing was the result of the protests of the past three years. Fishermen from the east coast meet monthly to discuss issues and monitor the Fisheries Committee and plan future actions.

Mayors of Coastal Communities: after the elections in 1996 the Fishermen's Forum invited newly elected mayors for a briefing and

convinced these officials of the economic and social importance of artisanal fishing and helped to build a partnership with the

universities which culminated in the presentation of the **Plan for the management and development of sustainable fishing and aqua- culture.**

Fishermen participated in the **II. International Workshop of ArtesanalFishing organized by the Federal University of Ceará and the Canadian Development Agency in 1996.**

The "Instituto Terramar" takes up the vacant leadership role in the Fishermens movement and provides technical assistance and advise to the Fishermens Forum. It also extends its community work to the west coast of Ceara

Artesanal fishermen from the east coast join the fishermen from the Community of Redonda and purchase a motor-ship which they put at the disposal of fisheries authorities for enforcement of fisheries regulation at sea.

In two months over 50 pirate boats are apprehended and punished.

In the absence of meaningful enforcement on the coast the fishermen

resort to their own justice – **local community courts** punish fishermen guilty of predatory fishing.

Instituto Terramar invites Ibama to participate in the organization of the **I. International Seminar on Responsible Fishing.** The event with over 250 participants from India, Canada and all over Brazil debates the FAO Code of Conduct for responsible fishing. Over 120 artesanal fishermen participate for the first time in their life in a real seminar and show their creativity and commitment to responsible fishing in 6 regional workshops. The seminar is financed by **ICSF** (International Collective in Support of Fishworkers) from India which has decided to support the fight of Ceara's fishermen.

Member of Congress Inacio Arruda and Senator Lucio Alcantara staunch defenders of Artesanal Fishing in Brasilia added their prestige to the Seminar.

State **Senator Lúcio Alcântara** is the moving force behind the new law of environmental crimes which foresees severe punishmentfor predatory fishing. The law goes into effect on April 1, 1998 (no joke)! Fishermen suffer the ups and downs of the Federal Government, the lack of interest of the State Government, repression from corrupt enforcement agents, political interference in Ibama and continuous changes in the fisheries authorities staff. Lobster catches drop year after year. The years 1997 and 1998 are the worst in lobster history. **But they don't give up.**

1998. A new Management at Ibama Ceara, a new partnership. **The fishermen and Instituto Terramar** enter with US\$ 10.000.00 from ICSF to finance 50% of a program with Ibama. The **LOBSTER CARAVAN** covers 570 kilometers of coastline with a road-show to convince the fishing sector that the Lobster Management Plan has to be implemented. Simultaneously they join representatives of all sector of fisheries at 6 regional seminars to discuss the problem of excessive fleet capacity and the need to reduce the fishing effort. **In a historical moment - at the final**

seminar the sector approves changes to fisheries regulations and a plan for the reduction of the fishing fleet.

Once again, despite the promises to ratify the changes, Ibama bureaucrats in Brasilia delay publication of the new rules for three months into the fishing season. As a result of further budget cuts enforcement and other activities suffer. The regularization of the fleet is carried out with a lot of difficulties and there is practically no coordination with the other lobster producing states in Brazil. The fishermen see no great future for the Lobster Management Plan in the hands of Ibama and start to look for alternatives in the newly created department for fisheries within the Ministry of Agriculture. There is a potential danger that fisheries could be split up between the two ministries and infighting is in full swing. The fishermen's forum talks the State Government into contributing \$30'000 – for repairs of the community ship and to guarantee operation of enforcement trips in the sea for the rest of 1998.

And the Fishermen's Forum looks to create a partnership with the industrial sector and launches one more awareness campaign...this time to bring about changes in the way Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso plans to manage fisheries in the future and for a greater participation of the fisheries sector.

The demands and proposals are:

1. Fisheries and fisheries management has to be transferred to the newly created Department for Fisheries and Aqua-culture (DPA) in the Ministry of Agriculture, except enforcement and environmental education.
2. Full implementation of the Lobster Management Plan as a top priority of DPA.
3. The fisheries sector of the State of Ceara should create the lobster foundation with funds coming from voluntary contributions or a tax on lobster exports, thus becoming less dependent on Government budget turmoil.
4. Consolidate the State Fisheries Committee to unify the fishing sector in the interest of sustainable development. Securing the active participation of the industrial union.
5. Secure the increased support of Fisheries Management by the State and Municipal Governments of Ceara.

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